



**Nov. 21, 2007**

## HEALTH INFORMATION

### **National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) November 26<sup>th</sup> – December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007**

Every year in the United States, an average 5% to 20% of the population becomes infected with the influenza virus. More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from influenza complications, and about 36,000 people die from influenza. In North Dakota, there are approximately 400 deaths related to influenza and pneumonia during any given influenza season. Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and its severe complications. Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for the following groups:

- Persons at high risk for influenza-related complications and severe disease, including:
  - children aged 6-59 months
  - pregnant women
  - persons aged  $\geq 50$  years and
  - persons of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- Persons who live with or care for persons at high risk, including
  - household members in frequent contact with persons at high risk and who can transmit influenza to those persons at high risk, and
  - health-care workers
- Anyone wanting to prevent getting the flu

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announce the second annual National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) for the week of November 26 through December 2, 2007. NIVW is intended to raise awareness about the seriousness of influenza, the importance of influenza vaccination and remind people who have not yet been vaccinated, that it is not too late.

Currently, influenza activity in the state is low and typically does not peak until January or later. So far this season, there have been five lab-identified influenza cases reported to the state health department. In North Dakota, the flu season has peaked in January or later during 8 of the past 10 influenza seasons. In addition, many people recommended to receive influenza vaccination have not been vaccinated by November.

To promote influenza vaccination, the NDDoH is hosting an educational seminar: Flu Shots! What you Need to Know, with Dr. Jeanne Santoli, deputy director of the immunization services division with the CDC, as the keynote speaker. The seminar and dinner held November 26, 2007, in Fargo, ND is free to health-care providers and partners. For more information or to register, call 800.472.2180.

Visit the health department website at [www.ndflu.com](http://www.ndflu.com) for more information about influenza.

*Categories of Health Alert messages:*

- *Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.*
- *Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.*
- *Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.*
- *Health Information provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.*

*This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, North Dakota EMS Association and hospital public information officers.*